

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:7656

ANSWERED ON:16.05.2002

EXPLOSION IN DRDO LABORATORY

A. VENKATESH NAIK;ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL;CHANDRA NATH SINGH;RAMJI MANJHI;RAMSHETH THAKUR;SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK;SUKDEO PASWAN;SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a fire had broken out recently in DRDO laboratory known as High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) killing six persons including three casual labourers;
- (b) if so, whether employing of casual labourers at sensitive defence units working on nuclear and missile projects have raised questions of security;
- (c) if so, whether the Government enquired into the employing of casual labourers in sensitive units;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (e) the compensation paid to the dependents of deceased employees;
- (f) whether any incident of fire could delay the nuclear and missile programme; and
- (g) if so, the steps taken by the Government to prevent such incidents in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) Yes, Sir. Fire had broken out on 25th April, 2002 in solid propellant processing unit of High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Pune, a laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Six personnel were killed including two Technical Officers of HEMRL and four workers of contractor.

(b) There is no breach of security procedures. There is Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between HEMRL and Vishvat Chemicals of Mumbai for operating the solid propellant processing unit under the guidance and supervision of HEMRL.

(c) & (d): The processing facility is operating under Government Owned, Company Operated (GOCO) concept. The firm employees are permitted to work only after security checks.

(e) DRDO has paid Rs. 50,000/- each from Benevolent Fund to the deceased contract workers of company and Rs. 1,00,000/- to each of the HEMRL employees. In addition Rs. 20,000/- has been paid by HEMRL to its employees and interim relief of Rs. 10,000/- has been paid by the company to dependents of each of the deceased contractor's employees pending insurance settlement. All deceased will get full compensation as per Factory Act. Other compensation including family pension, insurance etc. will be paid as per rules.

(f) No, Sir.

(g) Court of Inquiry is still investigating the causes of accident and to suggest remedial measures.